



## Who? Me?

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Remembrance day always brings back memories, some sad, some glad. The tragedy of Remembrance Day would be if we were not to learn from the heritage of our past. Can we learn from our rich heritage found in the Word of God as well? As we go to the word of God, I am taking us back into the Old Testament, Judges chapter 6. I want us to turn there and look at a man that we certainly would not consider to be one of heavens heroes, but he really turns out to be a hero for God. His name is Gideon.

As I was reflecting upon this weekend and all that Remembrance Day represents, I was reminded that for the most part, people who go or have gone to serve our country, were not those who would be on the front page of the newspaper. Nor would they be known as the primary leaders in their towns, but these people who worked and led relatively quiet lives and lived their lives in their own little world to some degree.

I am reminded also, that God wants to use us right where we are as well. We don't have to be on the front page or you don't have to be someone special by the world's standards to be used by God. For those who gave the ultimate sacrifice or have sacrificed their life for our country, we praise God for them. But we also know that throughout the ages there have been those who have given their lives for God's kingdom and His work, and many of those were relatively unknowns. Every now and then God calls an unknown to step up the forefront to do an important task, an important ministry. We find that in the book of Judges, chapter 6. I want to introduce Gideon to you and the Holy Spirit to challenge us for few moments today on how we can be used and be sensitive to the spirit of God.

I have always been amazed, as I look across our North American history at those times when difficulties arose and there were enemies and our country was being challenged, at how many so quickly dropped everything they had and went to signed up and become part of our armed forces, and were willing to go without a moment's hesitation. I think today in the fellowship of God we need people who are really ready to drop what they are doing and pick up and go for the Lord Jesus Christ, to reaffirm our faithfulness to God, that we would be used wherever He wants us to be.

Judges, Chapter 6 and beginning with verse 6. Verse 6- So Israel was very low because of Midian and the sons of Israel cried to the Lord. 7 Now it came about when the sons cried of the Lord on account of Midian, 8 that the Lord sent a prophet to the sons of Israel, and he said to them, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, It was I who brought you up from Egypt, and brought you out from the hands of all your oppressors and dispossessed them before you and gave you their land. 10 And I said to you, I am the Lord your God. You shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in his whose land you live, but you have not obeyed me. 11 Then the angel of the Lord came, and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which was in Joash the Abiezrite, as his son Gideon, was beating out wheat in the wind press in order to save it from the Midianites. 12 The angel from the Lord appeared to him and said to him, the Lord is with you O valiant warrior. 13 Then Gideon said to him, Oh my Lord, if the Lord is with us why then has all this happened to us and where are all his miracles which our fathers told us about saying, did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.14 And the Lord looked at him and said, go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian, have I not sent you? 15 And he said to him, Oh Lord, how shall I save Israel, behold my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house. 16 And the Lord said to him, Surely, I will be with you and you shall defeat Midian, as one man.

Remembrance Day is a time to reflect on the past, a time to be thankful for the freedom we now enjoy because of the unselfish dedication of those who served their country—some of whom gave their lives for the freedom we now. Obviously, it was very traumatic time and a very difficult time and many heroes arose out of that very difficult situation just as many heroes have risen throughout our North American history. There have been those who have come to aid, literally, of their country by giving their all, by dropping that which they were doing and being willing to go and to serve. God wants us to be like that as well, and as we look across the pages of scripture, we find men and women who were willing to go, and to do what God wanted them to do.

Gideon is a very interesting personality. If you read the entire episode of Gideon, you find that here is man who feels very inadequate, and probably rightfully so. I fear sometimes as Christians that maybe we don't have the stamina or resolve that believers before us had. Willing to go and do what God wants us to do. But for Gideon it was a challenge and for us today it is a challenge, are we going to rise to the challenge. When God calls us to a task, are we going to say, "Who me"? "You want me to do this?" Or are we going to be responsive and say, "Lord, I feel inadequate, I'm not sure exactly what I need to do, but I make myself fully and completely available to you."

So, as we look at Gideon, we are reminded of some things. One of the things we are reminded of is that in God's sight, our potential is limited only by our lack of faith. All that Gideon has to step out on was his faith. Here he was hiding, he was afraid, and the Lord said to him, "You have nothing to be

afraid of, I am with you.” In fact it is very interesting in this passage of scripture, in verse 14, it says that the Lord looked at him. I just caught this during my study this past week----- the Lord looked at him. I’m not real sure what that means exactly. You know that this is startling to me, that the Lord would take the time and opportunity to look at one person. The Bible says that in the power of the Holy Spirit, that’s what God does for us, is that we stand before God as one and that God loves us so much, and he knows us so well and wants the very best for us, individually. So we are challenged to be reminded that God looks at us individually. He looks at us and says here is something I want you to do. Here is something that you can accomplish and that potential is limited only by our faith or a lack of faith. We claim to be a people of faith, and certainly for Gideon he had to step out and be a person of faith. God acknowledges his faith in us. He acknowledges his faith in us that he chooses to use us. That wonderful passage that I read to you in verse 12, the angels said, “the Lord is with you, O valiant warrior”, and when the angel spoke that, I’m sure that Gideon looked around to see if anyone else was around, because there wasn’t any way that God couldn’t be talking to him, he wasn’t a valiant warrior. But you see, God has that much faith in us!

You may be saying today, “I just can’t do anything for God”. You are limiting your potential by your lack of faith. How do you know you can’t do it? As a believer and follower in Jesus Christ today, how do you know you can’t do it? Maybe God is speaking and looking at you directly today, and He is speaking so clearly and plainly that you know the message, and yet you are denying it. Or you are here today, as an unbeliever, and God is speaking to you, He has been speaking to you and you know His presence is there, you know the Bible is true, you know that there is a heaven and a hell, you acknowledge all of that and yet for some reason you are not willing to step out on your faith. It may be time to do that, because you see there comes a time for all of us when we have to step out by faith. We live by faith, every day, in so much we do, don’t we? God says, we can be a people of courage, we can be a people of strength, and the whole matter here is a matter of attitude.

I read in the book of Acts and look at Paul and Silas. In chapter 16 of Acts, Paul and Silas are in jail, you would think this would be the most miserable of circumstances, and yet we find Paul and Silas singing praises to the Lord, because, if that is where God wants them, then it is okay with them. Their faith was such that if that’s where God wants them for the time being, then they can handle that, it’s okay. If that is what God wanted, then that’s all that matters. That is also true today for us, if that’s what God wants, then that is really all that matters. It doesn’t matter what the world says.

I think of all the millions, and millions of men and women who have dropped everything to go serve their country. Particularly, in difficult times of war, when the threat was very real. When this country felt as though it was either a victory, or a loss of two away from winning or losing their freedoms that we have, that people would do, would go, would serve and how today we live on that kind legacy. I think of Christians today those who’ve gone before us, who have built the foundation on which we can rest today, as believers in Christ. How they dropped what they wanted to do, they were willing to do, and do what God wanted them to do, that we might have that foundation to build upon today.

Gideon felt inadequate, we feel inadequate, but God says, hold on a minute, I know you personally and have confidence in you. Isn’t that wonderful and remarkable? Here’s Gideon is hiding and God says, “I have full confidence in you, valiant warrior?”. Sometimes we look at things in a limited manner and we limit ourselves because of our lack of faith, and because we really don’t want to listen to God. The book of Proverbs says fear is a terrible snare. When we allow ourselves to be encumbered by fear, we get

caught up in ourselves and our own paranoia set in and we lack the faith that is needed in order to do kingdom work.

“There was a terrible storm in the night and a little boy into bed with his parents. He snuggled up in the warm bed between his mom and dad. The father, in sensing this was a teachable moment, said, “son, you don’t have to be afraid.” After thinking a moment the little boy said, “I can’t keep my mind off being afraid.” This is the way it is for us sometimes as believers in Christ. We look at the fear side and allow that to set in and it limits us, in what we can do God. We do not need to be afraid, if God is part of the picture. It is part of His desire for us to run the race for Him, that we be courageous for Him, that we be willing to do our part for Him. When we begin to look at I it from God sight, suddenly the foe doesn’t seem quite so intimidating, does it? Suddenly, when we begin to grab a “God view” of things, when we see if from God’s perspective, suddenly we begin to realize that God really has everything in His control after all and we don’t have to be afraid. But, it all depends on how we look at his, it all depends upon the situation.

“A man went to the zoo, and as he was walking around, he was looking at all the animal exhibits. He came up to the wildcat exhibit. While he was there, he looked and suddenly the door opened on the other side. In came a custodian into the wildcat’s habitat, and the man watched in amazement as the custodian began to sweep and cleaned up the den where the wildcat was. As he watched he noticed that the custodian had no weapon, only a broom in his hand, the man continued to sweep and clean, and the wildcat just lay there and seemed to be paying no attention to the custodian. Finally the man, called across the den to the custodian and said, “Sir, you are a very brave man.!” and he put his head down and continued to sweep. The man called back across the den again and said, “Well sir, that wildcat there, it must be tamed.” The custodian looked up again and said, “No, no he isn’t tamed.” So the man was perplexed by this, and said, “Tell me something, if the wildcat isn’t tamed, and you are not brave, then I don’t understand why he doesn’t attack you.” The custodian shouted back to him and said, “ Because he doesn’t have any teeth!” That’s the way it is in life, we see the enemy face to face, but in reality, in the power of God, the enemy has not teeth! We can be a courageous people. We heed not be afraid, we need not to take second best, sure, there may be that fear, but the courage of Christ is greater than any fear there is.

So Gideon understood the call of God. He steps up and says, “I will do this, I don’t understand it, but I will do it.” Understand something folks, God’s methods are not always man’s methods. If you read the story, God calls together over thirty two-hundred soldiers. That thirty two-thousand is eliminated by twenty two-thousand and they are down to ten thousand. Ultimately, Gideon ends up going in battle with not twenty-thousand soldiers, but three hundred soldiers. But, you see, it is much better to have three hundred soldiers and it be God’s army, than to have thirty two hundred soldiers and it not be God’s army.

Gideon learned a lot about the will of God, the power of God, how God can use us if we are willing to be used and want to be used.

Gideon decided he would be used by God. Let me say to you today, God will use you, if you will allow him to. It may mean giving up something. It may mean changes your attitude about something. It may mean looking at things from a different perspective. It may mean moving you beyond your comfort zone. He apparently was a very self-centered farmer, who was content simply hide, into being the

number one man in God's work, the number one man in God's kingdom, the number one man in leading God's people at a very difficult time. Gideon learned the lesson that God's might is greater than the might of the world.

I'm not sure how men and women felt who left this country to go serve. I can't speak to it, I've never been in the armed services, but many of you have. You went into the armed services at a time when our country was in real difficult situations. I don't know how you must have felt. I'm sure you must have felt overwhelmed and afraid. I think of the countless tens of thousands of men and women who served and went into foreign countries, launched off of ships and went into the unknown, literally, not knowing from one moment to the next, whether they would be alive or not, and many died. Many cemeteries across this world today have many, many thousands of brave American men and women who served this country. But, they went and they served.

Let me tell you, Gideon says to us as Christians today, we need to go and serve. We need to turn loose of ourselves and we need to go and serve. We need to turn loose of being intimidated and afraid and go and serve. When God says, "You are the person that I want, right now", rather than saying, "Oh God, I can't do that" – grab hold of God's vision and look at it from God's perspective and see if from God's view, and suddenly you will begin to see that God is willing to empower you and use you for his glory. Not only that but collectively, in the bigger sense in His church. Gideon learned a powerful lesson about what God can do with one individual, and today, we need to learn that lesson as well. Oh yes, it will take courage, it will take strength, and it will take determination to do what God wants and not what you want. But, let me tell you, it is a commitment that is worth the investment, for you will never go wrong serving God and following Him. Oh, you may question God and say, "God, I can't do this!" He will say, "Oh, yes you can, because I know you potential better than you do." You may say, "God I don't know if I can invest the time." He says, "All time is my time, it is not your time to begin with, and you do have the time to do it."

It's a matter of us being willing to be used of God. How horrific it would have been for our country today, if during the darkest hours of our country in this last century, if selfishness had abounded throughout our land and people had been unwilling to serve, our country would not have survived. We would not have, we couldn't have survived. It would have been impossible. Today, I think about all there is to do as Christians, I am reminded that we are called today, to be a people of love, compassion and caring, a people who are visible and like Gideon, say, "Yes, I will do it! I don't know how you are going to do it through me God, but I know you are going to do it and I will allow you to do it through my life for you honor and your glory."

Dear friend, it's up to you to decide. Are you going to allow God to use you or not? Gideon said yes, and God did. Do you have enough faith in God today, to take that step for him? To take the step he wants you to take for Him? Whatever it is, I don't know what it is, but there is something you need to do for God today. Maybe, like Gideon, God's is asking you to step up and be accountable. Because, ultimately, you are accountable. You may have questioned God, but you understand that those questions are out of sight. God has empowered you to make the decision and has given you the strength to do that. He wants you to make that decision and you must make that decision.

If Gideon had said no, God would have moved on to someone else I'm sure. But you see the man of the hour was Gideon. Let me tell you, dear woman, dear man, you may be the person of the hour that

God is speaking to and you need to respond to his message and his call. Would you be willing to do that? Would you be willing to be like Gideon and say yes, I don't know how we are going to do this God, but if you have that much confidence in me then I'll do what you want me to do. Would you be willing to do that for God today? God, today, is literally looking at you. In a very spiritual sense he is looking at everyone of us today, eye to eye. The question for each of us is, are we going to be responsive to God?